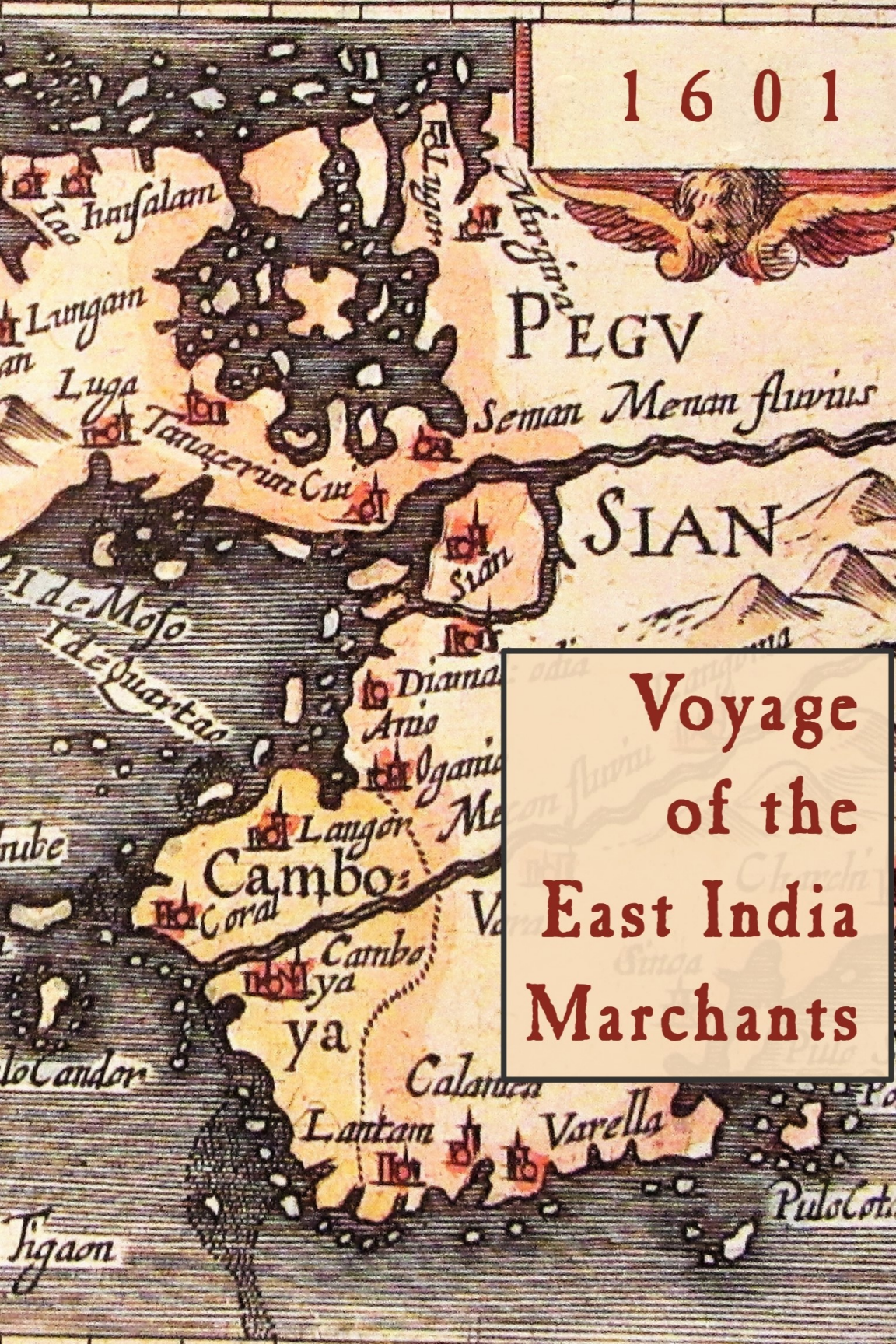
1601

Voyage of the East India Marchants



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A
TRUE AND
LARGE DISCOURSE
OF THE VOYAGE OF THE
WHOLE FLEETE OF SHIPS
set forth the 20. of Aprill 1601.
by the Governours and Assistants of
the East India Marchants in London,
to the *East Indies.*

WHEREIN IS SET DOWNE
the order and manner of their trafficke,
the discription of the Countries,
the nature of the people
and their language with
the names of all the men dead
in the Voyage.

AT LONDON
Imprinted for *Thomas Thorpe,*
and are to be solde by *William Aspley.* 1603.

Transcribed from a 1603 text in

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Voyage of the East India Marchants, 1601

Original text entitled, *A True and Large Discourse of the Voyage of the Whole Fleete of Ships set forth the 20. of Aprill 1601. by the Governours and Assistants of the East India Marchants in London to the East Indies.*

Written by Roger Style and Edward Highlord, 1603
(see introduction for explanation of authorship).

Transcription, introduction and annotation by Jim Potter, following the work of Clements Markham and William Foster in publications by the Hakluyt Society, 1877 and 1940, respectively.

History.

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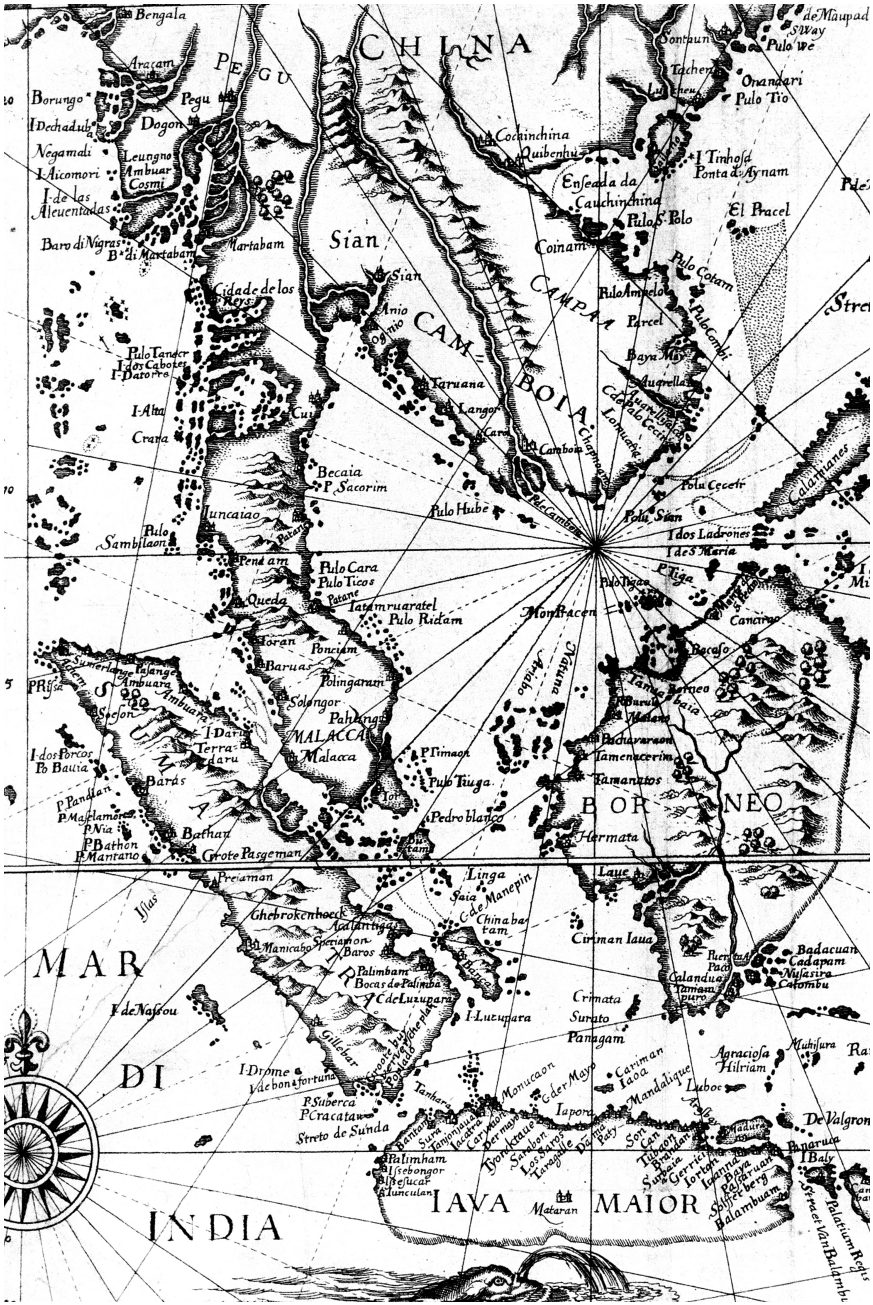

Detail of 'Mar di India', from German and Latin editions of De Bry's *Grand Voyages, Part XI : The Circumnavigations of William Cornelisz Schouten and Joris Van Spilbergen* (1619).

Introduction

This harrowing narrative of a voyage from London to Sumatra and back was first published in 1603. Only two copies of the original are known to exist. One is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The other is in Marsh's Library, Dublin, which kindly let me photograph the book for transcription. My gratitude goes to the librarians, guardians and governors of Marsh's Library for allowing me to see the collection, and for having maintained such a remarkable place through the tribulations of our past centuries.

The author was not credited in the 1603 pamphlet. He must have travelled on the ship *Ascension*, but its officers are ruled out because none of them spent the entire voyage on this one vessel. A sailor 'before the mast' is unlikely; common seamen were mostly illiterate, and the narrative contains few of the nautical details that ruled their lives.

However, the writing closely matches two letters relayed to London from the island of Saint Helena where the crew of the *Ascension* was recuperating on the way home.[1*] This correspondence was attributed to two men : Roger Style, merchant, and Edward Highlord, purser. Because the letters contained identical information—'both discoursing the state of the voyage [and] bothe concerning the partes which have bene visited for trade and howe many of our menn are dead in the voyage'—it seems likely that they were sent in concert in case one was lost. The style and contents are also very similar to the book published a few months after the *Ascension*'s arrival in England. Therefore, we can be confident that Style and Highlord wrote the *True and Large Discourse* as well.

They appear to have been sons or nephews of Olyver Style and John Highlord, two of the Company's original investors and directors. Whether or not this caused the young men to remove their names from the 1603 publication is unknown. Possibly, their text was not authorised by directors who wished to avoid the scandal of tragedy.

Roger Style had been eager to go East in any position available. When his initial application for employment was rejected, he offered to

* Notes for the introduction begin on page *xi*.

serve without pay just to secure a place from which he could advance his prospects. The Company then decided that the young man :

> ... may be imployed as a factor if anie of the rest shuld dye in the voyage, and is also content to be Left in the Countrey of the East Indies untill the returne of a seconde voyage in which residence he is content to apply him self to lerne the language which motion is well liked of and shal be further delt in hereafter.[2]

When another man withdrew, Style's perseverance was rewarded with a paid position as a 'third sorte of factor'. Olyver Style also paid £200 to ensure the place of his protégé.[3]

Edward Highlord first appears as the purser for the *Scourge of Malice*, later renamed the *Red Dragon*. He was involved with the preparation of this flagship but at some point became purser of the *Ascension*, on which he returned home with Roger Style. When that ship docked at Woolwich, they were ordered to remain onboard until all goods were unladen. The manner in which they collaborated is unclear (if in fact they did so), but possibly they wrote the *True and Large Discourse* at this time. Style and Highlord had just spent two years together amid tremendous suffering and danger; it seems likely that they shared a close bond and a desire to tell their story to the public.

Regardless of authorship, the accuracy of the account is supported for several reasons. First, unlike many tales of travel in the East, it is not painted with exotic salaciousness, impossible geography, doubtful heroism, or mythical animals apart from two 'mermaids' that were probably a species of pinniped.

More importantly, the story agrees very closely with an account written by a different author. Timing is important for this confirmation. The *Ascension* left Sumatra prior to the rest of the fleet and made landfall at Kent on 8 June 1603. On 25 June the *True and Large Discourse* was registered by the seller, William Aspley, who likely saw the commercial value of early news about the English venture. The voyage commander, James Lancaster, would not return until September 1603. Someone on his ship then wrote, *The First Voyage made to East-India by Master James Lancaster (now knight) for the Merchants of London, anno 1600*. For unknown reasons, this second narrative was not published

until much later in 1625 by Samuel Purchas, though it could have been distributed earlier. Despite years between publications, however, there are only minor discrepancies between separate witnesses on different ships. This lends credence to both accounts.

Of course, the similarities might not be coincidental. Though the narratives clearly had different authors, several sentences describing flora and fauna in the Nicobar Islands are almost identical in both. Presumably the latter writer referred to the earlier publication to fill gaps in his knowledge.[4]

In more recent times, the *True and Large Discourse* was published by the Hakluyt Society in 1877 with annotation by Clements Markham, and again in 1940 with notes by William Foster. I've borrowed from their learned research while trying to illuminate obscurities with modern research tools.

PURPOSE OF THE VOYAGE

Mercantile affairs, state politics and piracy were indistinguishable in the early modern ocean. Trade involved violence against rival merchants as much as building relationships, while naval policy required seizure of enemy revenue as much as sinking ships. Consequently, the European trading companies that evolved together during the 17th century were both tools and beneficiaries of state patronage.

This was particularly true for England, which had been at war with Spain and Portugal since 1585. The struggle was economic as much as military because the Iberian economies were buoyed by silver taken from mines in Potosí and Mexico, and by spices, porcelain, silk and other valuable goods arriving from the East Indies. The conflict escalated with the threat of the Spanish Armada, but didn't disappear along with the Spanish ships that were wrecked on the coast of Ireland in 1588.

One way to reduce Iberian dominance at sea had been demonstrated by Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish, who had raided Spanish America since the 1570s. They did so to their immense personal profit, but also to the political profit of their country. At sea, their raids were piracy. When done under government sanction, though, they became either state piracy or legitimate acts of war and commerce, depending on one's perspective.

Queen Elizabeth I and her council took the latter view. Yet alone, individual privateers could never adequately project English power at sea, nor seriously diminish the wealth that its foes obtained from trade and conquest. Neither could they develop sailors, ship-building and naval skills to defend against invasion. To do so required a stable organisation with a permanent presence at sea, and overseas.

Forging that organisation became possible due to a convergence of events. For one, politics and profits were beginning to align with advancements in the means of long-distance trade. This had little to do with naval architecture, which was constrained by limitations of physics, materials and tradition that would barely change until the 19th century. It had more to do with a greater ability of shipyards to replace vessels lost at sea, as well as massive firepower by use of newer, lighter cannon.

Additionally, loose rutters and looser rumours finally made their way to Europeans who had long craved the secrets of Portuguese navigation. Of particular note was Jan Hugyen van Linschoten, who served the archbishop of Goa in the 1580s. Put in a position of confidence, Linschoten copied hoards of maps, sailing directions and other information that he published as his *Itinerario* in 1596. Two years later this was translated into English as *Discourse of Voyages into the East & West Indies*. His writing was complemented by others, and it is no coincidence that England and the Netherlands aggressively entered the Indian Ocean soon after the information became available. In fact, in late 1599 Linschoten's and similar works were cited in an appeal to Queen Elizabeth to grant a license for trade in the East.[5]

A final piece of the puzzle involved debt, risk and greed. Very few individuals were capable of financing repeated voyages to the far side of the world in the 16th century. Credit was in short supply, and the idea of collaborative investment had yet to be fully formed. Even monarchs were shy of the expense, often because it made them vulnerable to nobles and wealthy persons who lent the money. Eventually the idea of spreading risks among private, commercial 'adventurers' provided the confidence to amass the necessary funding.

All of these events were pushed forward by the promise of substantial reward. Though the risks were immense, London merchants knew that investments in the East Indies could double or more. For example,

in 1606, cloves bought in Ambon for £2,948 were sold in England for £36,287. After expenses, this gave investors a two-year return of 234%.

Voyages to the East were also enticing because the sources of production remained largely in the hands of Asians who could be negotiated with, rather than Spaniards who could not. Moreover, most of the Indian Ocean was not Spanish at all; it was trafficked by a decaying Portuguese administration that seemed ripe for the plucking. Even so, the merchants understood that forming a company was absolutely necessary because '... the trade of the Indies being soe remote, [it] could not be trade on, but on a jointe and united stock'.[6]

In 1589, requests for a royal license to trade resulted in several early voyages. These failed financially, accomplished no trade, and killed large numbers of men. Yet they gained vital knowledge. English ships had been able to round the Cape of Good Hope, then range about the Indian Ocean for years with very little Iberian opposition. The door to the East was open.

By 1599, a formidable rival was passing through that door *en masse*. This gave London merchants still greater urgency. In an appeal to the Privy Council they claimed they were :

> ... induced by the successe of the voyage performed by the Dutch Nacion, and being informed that the Dutchemen prepare for a new voyage, and to that ende have bought diverse ships here, in Englande, were stirred with noe lesse affeccion to advance the trade of their native countrie, than the Dutche merchants were to benefite their commonwealth.[7]

Cities in the Netherlands were organising a collective structure that soon evolved into the first global conglomerate. In particular, their ability to assemble massive funding allowed them to muscle out competition and endure losses. In contrast, the fledgling English company only had funds for a single voyage, or perhaps not even that because many prospective investors backed out when they had to turn promises into money. Therefore, no solid plans could be made for annual fleets or the overseas stations necessary to acquire goods in advance. Royal investment was both unwanted and unavailable. If the merchants desired long-term success, they needed to find an alternate source of credit and capital.

To that end, they planned to steal the money from the Iberians. And like Drake and Cavendish, they used a pretext of intermittent war to obtain official sanction for seaborne robbery. The Company's own historiographer, John Bruce, later wrote :

> The wealth which these celebrated navigators [had] brought to England in gold, silver, &c., though obtained by making prizes of the Spanish vessels, induced the English merchants to form the opinion that, great profits and national advantages might be acquired, by fitting out ships to follow a direct trade to India, and, by sales or purchases, to increase the commerce, and improve the navigation, of the realm;—and, besides, that they might have the chance of making prizes from the Portuguese and Spaniards, which would defray, in part, the charges of the equipments.[8]

Letters of reprisal were duly given to the Company by the Lord High Admiral, 'authorising' the seizure of anything belonging to the king or subjects of Spain and Portugal (joined together, at the time).[9]

This decision resulted in the capture of the *Santo Antônio* in the Strait of Melaka on 3 October 1602 (p. 14). Her cargo of textiles, rice and other goods was worth 300,000 cruzados and took six days to unlade. Some was shared with Dutch collaborators and the sultan of Aceh, but most went to fund future operations of the Company including a permanent station in Bantam. The *Antônio*'s 600 passengers had no recourse against this act of theft by violence at sea, otherwise known as piracy.

Thus, the creation of the East India Company in 1600 was only one-third a mercantile affair. It could not be divorced from the use of piracy to fund its operations, nor from England's naval politics. Indeed, from the crown's perspective, trade was useful mostly to sustain the Company's existence while countering the advance of European rivals. Importantly, it did so without incurring state debt which was the bane of monarchs, parliaments and subjects alike.

PREPARATION FOR THE VOYAGE

Debt was a primary concern because the venture was a huge undertaking. Financial requirements alone amounted to £72,000. In England in 1600, this equated to 1,440,000 days of skilled labor, or around 5,000 years of work for a single tradesman.[10]

The Company began by obtaining five ships :

Red Dragon ('the admiral'), a 600-ton ship with 38 guns and 202 men including James Lancaster, commanding general of the fleet.

Hector ('the vice-admiral'), a 300-ton ship with 24 guns and 108 men, including captain John Middleton. The pilot-major was John Davis, a legendary navigator with long experience in piracy.

Ascension, a 260-ton ship with 24 guns and 82 men. The initial captain was William Brund, described as '... a grave and discreet merchant'.

Susan, a 240-ton ship with 24 guns and 88 men, including captain John Hayward.

Gift, a 120-ton pinnace used as a 'victualler'.

Three of the vessels had already seen years of service, particularly in the Levant trade. The *Red Dragon* had been specifically built in 1595 by the Earl of Cumberland to raid Spanish settlements in the Americas.

To command this warship and the merchant ships needed to carry the seized cargo, the Company hired James Lancaster. Like the selection of his vessel, the choice was not by default. He was a proven seaman who had already conducted years of piracy around the world, including the East Indies from 1591 to 1593. That voyage had also been financed by London merchants, though the fleet carried no trade goods at all and instead gave deck space to soldiers. The expedition was a financial failure, and Lancaster's drive to pillage the Portuguese veered into an obsession that took hundreds of his seamen's lives. The dwindling, exhausted, starving crew finally stranded him in the Caribbean and surrendered to the Spanish.

Lancaster was undaunted. In 1594 he launched a voyage to Brazil that had no other ambition than sacking Portuguese warehouses at Pernambuco. This time he was spectacularly successful. The takings allowed him to retire as a country gentleman until presented with with an opportunity to redeem his failure in the East Indies.

The choice of this man as commander strongly indicates that the London merchants expected to profit from conflict. Yet Lancaster was much more than a pirate. He had proven himself as a skilled navigator, diplomat and negotiator. Most importantly, he was an exceptional leader of men during difficult circumstances.

Knowing the severe risks, Lancaster and his officers prepared as best they could. The author of the Purchas narrative wrote :

> These ships they furnished with men, victuals, and munition for twentie months; and sent in them, in merchandise and Spanish money, to the value of seven and twentie thousand pounds. All the rest of their stocke was spent and consumed about the shippes and other necessaries appertayning to them, with money lent to the mariners and saylers beforehand that went upon the voyage.[11]

Paying wives and families before a voyage was necessary because a large death toll was expected. It could not have been otherwise considering the nature of sailing at the time, in which entire fleets often disappeared without a trace. From those who survived these ordeals came only rare tales of success among tomes of suffering. This was true not only of the sailors and officers but of the Company's commercial servants as well. Each ship was therefore supplied with '... three merchants to succeed one the other, if any of them should be taken away by death'.

By the end of the voyage, forty percent of the men who had left England in 1601 would be dead from scurvy, disease, drowning, violence, accident and suicide. Others were permanently disabled, and some went insane. It became a familiar tale that remains true today: investors risked money; sailors risked their lives, and often lost.

RESULTS OF THE VOYAGE

The subsequent history of the East India Company is covered by kilometers of shelf-space.[12] It won't be addressed here except to note that Roger Style and Edward Highlord were promoted for the second voyage to the Indies. This time, Style commanded the *Ascension* while Highlord was a leading merchant. Style died of fever in Bantam in December 1604. When the command structure was altered to make up for the loss, Highlord became captain of the *Susan*.[13] He left Java on 4 March 1605, bound for home via the Indian Ocean. The ship was never heard from again.[14] No record contains the names of the drowned sailors, nor what happened to their families.

The fate of these men should make us consider the fates of others. And so, instead of pottering down well-trodden paths of wars, trade and

politics, we could focus on much rarer evidence provided by Roger Style and Edward Highlord : the names of the dead. This seems to have been a primary intention in writing the *True and Large Discourse*, and well they did so. Fatalities at sea were so frequent that captains often failed to even record the names, and today one has to search very hard for insight into the plight of common men who served crown and company. Additionally, apart from the richly detailed journal of Edward Barlow, there are very few narratives of sailors' lives from cradle to grave, including their motivations for going to sea.[15] Digitisation of archival material has begun to open some of these sources, but their study remains rare.

Consequently, most history written about the East India Company has glossed over the staggering death toll of its own people. John Bruce, for example, in his *Annals of the Honorable East-India Company* (1810), made no mention of suffering during the first voyage. Similar exclusion has been repeated ever since. For example, in his insightful history of the EIC's corporate development, Nick Robins said very little about how likely it was for its employees to die.

This is a glaring omission in the study of the European companies, and it is not confined to Britain. People in the Netherlands still revel in memory of the *Gouden Eeuw*—the Dutch Golden Age—which was intertwined with profits from the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*. The VOC was spectacular and fascinating and still influences the world today. But it was also built on the backs of those who suffered and died in the Indies. This meant Asians who were enslaved, oppressed, impoverished and killed. It also meant Dutch citizens who never returned home due to their company's ruthless demands for efficiency.[16]

The same applies to Portuguese expansion in the 16th century, which is still hailed in the country as *os Descrobrimentos*. Certainly discoveries were made, but fairly viewed they were mostly tools of war and profit. In that quest, Portuguese citizens died in droves along with their Asian victims. When a huge *nau* left Lisbon, around half the people on board would be dead within a year.[17] To greater or lesser extent, the same was true for Spanish, French, Danes and others who sailed east.

Therefore, to ignore the names of the dead is to miss a crucial part of the story, for how could any venture attract servants if they were equally likely to die as survive? What circumstances at home would drive

men to take such huge risks for relatively little reward? And what political and social structure made it possible for these losses to barely dent crown and company profits for centuries?

Equally important is whether the legacies of these voyages have continued to the present day. By 1602 the Dutch had built the foundation of a huge, globalised public-private company, while the 'marchants of London' had formed the basis of the world's first private corporation. The question of which was first or better is specious, because neither would have reached its full power without the competition and innovations of the other. For example, the VOC seems to have been inspired by the EIC's acquisition of capital by state-sanctioned piracy during its first voyage. In February 1603, just a few months after the English seized the *Santo Antônio* and her goods worth 300,000 cruzados, the Dutch took the *Santa Catarina*. The proceeds may have increased the Compagnie's capital by fifty percent. Two years later they plundered the hapless *Santo Antônio* again. The portion of goods that reached the Netherlands sold for 565,000 cruzados.[18]

In the end, piracy at sea was unsustainable and unnecessary. Portuguese shipping could only be plundered for a few years, while in contrast, credit markets and limited liability opened up a well of funding for centuries. These financial and legal inventions allowed investors to gather vast resources while shielding them from responsibility for the harm their actions did to others, including their own employees. In turn, this inherent conflict brought corporations into complex relationships with governments which benefited from their existence yet often paid for their excesses.[19] Despite mythic claims of private enterprise, the relationship has continued to the present day where it constantly veers between symbiosis and parasitism.

Our first evidence of this sword—double-edged, yet only sharp on one side—is *A True and Large Discourse of the Voyage of the Whole Fleete of Ships set forth the 20. of Aprill, 1601, by the Governours and Assistants of the East India Marchants of London, to the East Indies.*

NOTES

1 One of the letters from St. Helena is at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. William Foster transcribed it in: *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591–1603*. (Hakluyt; London; 1940). pp. 144–8.

2 Court minutes of the East India Company, 22 November 1600, in: Stevens, Henry. *The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies as Recorded in the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1599–1603*. (Stevens & Son; London; 1886). p. 86.

3 Court minutes of the East India Company, 24 December 1600, in: Stevens 1886, p. 105.

4 The author of the 1625 Purchas narrative remains unidentified.

5 'Account of the limit of the Portugals Jurisprudence in the East Indies', ca. December 1599, in: Bruce, John. *The Annals of the Honorable East India Company, from their Establishment by the Charter of Queen Elizabeth, 1600, to the Union of the London and English Companies, 1707–8*. (London; 1810). vol. 1, pp. 115–121.

6 By 1600, the English Levant Company had already been importing goods from the East Indies for years, though they were limited and costly due to overland routes and middlemen. The sea route, on the other hand, was deemed so lucrative and important that the Levant Company essentially had its right to trade beyond the Middle East revoked.

7 Minutes of Adventurers, 25 Sept. 1599, in: Bruce 1810, p. 112–13.

8 ibid., pp. 108–9.

9 Foster 1940, p. xxix, referencing the First Letter Book, pp. 191–6.

10 National Archives of the United Kingdom, online currency converter : www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#

11 Purchas, Samuel. *Hakluytus Postumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes, Containing a History of the World by Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others* [1625]. (McLehose & Sons; Glasgow; 1905). vol. 2, p. 392.

12 The subsequent history won't be addressed except to suggest that it might be misleading to view the Company as a single entity. In fact, the EIC went through many fundamental transformations, including change into a joint-stock company in 1612, a publicly traded company in 1657, a bankrupt shambles under Josiah Child by 1690, reformation by 1708, an Asian land power in 1757, and increasing absorption by the British state after 1784. Instead of viewing these transformations as chapters within a single book, it might be more accurate to see them as different books within a single library.

13 Foster, William. *The Voyage of Sir Henry Middleton to the Moluccas, 1604–1606*. (Routledge; New York; 2016), p. 150.

14 ibid., p. xxx. Though the *Susan* was lost on the second voyage, the *Ascension* continued sailing until the fourth voyage. It was wrecked off the coast of Gujarat on 3 September 1609.

15 Edward Barlow was born near Manchester in 1642. Like most poor children at the time, he mostly had to fend for himself. He laboured in several depressing jobs before putting to sea at age seventeen. Aboard ship, life was often harder and more dangerous but at least there was some chance of advancement. Years later, Barlow returned home with clothes fine enough to attend church, attract suitors, and rouse jealousy among those who had stayed behind. Yet Barlow was exceptional in many ways—his sobriety, fidelity, self-discipline, choice of patrons, writing ability, luck, promotions and most of all his unlikely survival. Very few common sailors matched his success. Please see: Barlow, Edward. *Barlow's Journal of his Life at Sea in King's Ships East & West Indiamen & other Merchantmen from 1659 to 1703*. Basil Lubbock, transcription. (Hurst & Blackett; London; 1934).

16 For example, *Generale Missiven*, deel 8, p. 425 (Nationaal Archief, VOC 1328, p. 173), which describes the deaths of Dutch sailors and slaves when their ship sank in the Gulf of Martaban in 1662 : "... omtrent 1 ½ mijlen buyten de wal gesoncken ende te gronde gegaen met een Nederlander, die krepel was ende hem selven niet en kon helpen ende 54 van de ... lijfeygenen, maer de schipperende noch acht Nederlanders sijn naederhandt in 't dwaelen door de landen gestorven." Barlow wrote that Dutch sailors had lives even harder than the English due to VOC policies : "[M]any of their men die, both going out and

coming home in their ships : and their men are kept three and five years in the Indies before they can come home again, going from one ship to another in the country, which trade from one place to another, their conditions being so made before they go out of Holland, so that a third part of those that go out never come home again, most part of them dying of this [putrid] water, which killeth many, and also of the 'flukes' [dysentery] which sweepeth many away in their outward bound ships when they come into a hot country." (Barlow. Barlow's Journal, vol. 1, pp. 242–3).

17 Pyrard wrote in detail about these and other tragedies of the Estado da Índia : Pyrard de Laval, François. *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil.* Albert Gray and H.C.P. Bell, tr. (Hakluyt Society, vol. 76; London; 1887), especially vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 109–209 & 272; Also see: Cipolla 1985, p. 134; and exhibits at the Museu de Marinha, Belém, Lisboa.

18 Boxer 1968, p. 50; Boyajian 2008, pp. 150–1. The *Santo Antônio* was plundered by the Dutch in 1605, in collaboration with the queen and people of Pattani (Borschberg 2002).

19 Ultimately this conflict led to the dissolution of the British East India Company, which kept entangling the crown in financial liabilities and overseas problems it did not wish to have. Greed and depravity in Bengal led to Pitt's India Act of 1784 and the supervisory Board of Control, followed by a full take-over in 1858. Notably, the former legislation established the legal supremacy of government over corporations in the United Kingdom. This was distinct from the United States, which won its independence in 1783, and thus never established a defining legal precedent for the regulation of corporate activity. The bifurcated legacy continues to the present day.

THE TRANSCRIPTION

Rendering archaic text into a modern publication requires dissatisfying compromises. Though one desires to be true to the original, it must be remembered that typesetters themselves have made significant changes to handwritten manuscripts, and further that some ideas like standardised spelling did not yet exist in the 17th century. Even common words and proper nouns could have different spellings within a single paragraph, or even within a single sentence.

Usually these meanderings do not create great confusion, so they can be left uncorrected. However, in the present text a few adjustments were made for clarity :

'I' changed to 'J' where appropriate, such as 'Iohn' to 'John'.

'v' changed to 'u' where appropriate, such as 'vpon' to 'upon'.

Likewise, the printer's double-u has been changed from 'VV' to 'W'.

Periods after numerals have been eliminated.

Overlined letters often signified missing letters. These have been rendered into the complete word, such as 'strēgthned' into 'strengthened'.

Lastly, the troublesome old 's', written as ſ and to our eyes very similar to 'f', has been modernised.

Voyage of the East India Marchants 1601

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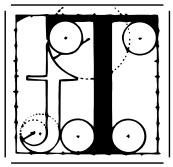

he 20 of Aprill 1601 we wayed Anchor and set saile out of *Torbay* by *Dartmouth*.

The 2 of May one of our Admiralles men fell overboord from the maine yard and was drowned.

The 7 of May we came to the *Canares*, where the Generall determined to renew our water : but altering his purpose, we wayed our Anchors and departed with a faire winde.

The 10 of May being Sunday the Generall, Captaines and Maisters dined aboord the *Hector*. Where the generall delivered them articles to be observed and kept both by sea and land, and what punishment should be inflicted upon the offenders.

The 12 of May wee passed the *Tropicke* with a fresh gaile.

The 24 we had a great storme.

The 25 we had a storme with great store of raine.

The 27 we had another storme continuing two houres.

The 21 of June we tooke a Portingall whose lading was Wine, Oyle, and Meale, being about the burthen of 100 tunne ; who not resisting was discharged of his Marchandise in foure dayes, to every ship according to his proportion.[1]

The 29 of June we passed the *Equinoctiall*, with a fresh gale of winde.

The 12 of July our maister Gunner of the *Ascention* dyed, who was the first that dyed in that ship : Here we tooke many flying fishes in the Aire.

The 16 of July we doubled the shoales of Braseele, and for joy thereof, every messe had a canne of Wine to supper.

The 20 of July we cast off the *Guift*, being about 18 degrees to the South of the *Equinoctiall*, here we tooke more fish then we could eate.[2]

About the first of August many of our men in every ship fell sicke of the scurvy, so that many died, and few were free of the infection throughout the fleete : so that there died 80 men in the fleete before we came to land.

The 9 of September, it pleased God after our long distresses, to send us to the sight of land at *Soldania* 16 leagues from the *Cape de bona Esperance*, and because it was in the night, and all our men very weake, we were in great danger, beeing very neare the shoare,[3] but God strengthned us, so that by his helpe, and the helpe of some of our Admiralles men when they had mored their ship, we were preserved not being able to helpe our selves.[4]

The 10 day our Generall went a shore to see if he could get some fresh victuals, and after hee had talked with the countrey people they made signes that they would bring Oxen and Sheepe within two or three sleepes.

The 14 day every ship sent provision on shoare for the building of *Tents*, and this day the inhabitantes of the country brought bullockes and sheep and so continued daylie for 12 dayes togeather, so that there were bought about 900 or 1000 sheep and bullockes in that time, The price of a bullock was two peeces of Yron hoopes of 6 inches long a peece, and the price of a sheepe one peece of the same length, provided that the oxen and sheepe were fat, or else we would not buy them. The people are blacke and goe naked, saving that they weare short coates of Seales skinne, and a peece of the same

skinne about their members, they are tall of stature, flat nosed, swift in running, they will picke & steale, although you looke on them : Their language is very hard to be pronounced by reason of a kinde of clacking with the tongue, so that we could not learne one worde of their language.[5] The country is full of pleasant rivers, there is also Deare, Quailes, and Partriges :

In this baye there is a small Iland not inhabited nor any good thing groweth[6] : Thither did the general send 6 sheep and two rammes, for the reliefe of strangers that might come thither, which shortly after was found there by certaine Flemmings to their reliefe, because they could get no cattell of the country people.[7] In this Island there is great aboundance of Seales, and Penguines, in such number as is almost incredible! The Seales, some are russet & some are blacke, both ugly & fearefull to looke on, the olde ones which are as big almost as a Beare, cry like a Beare, and the young ones crie like unto Lambes, they have but two feete, yet they use their hinder partes in going, by which meanes, they will goe or clime up any rocke a great pace, some of these we killed and made oyle of them, and some of the youngest we did eate, which to us seemed good meate. They lay partly on land, and partly in the water, for there is their refuge.

The Penguine is as strange as the other, being a bird which hath a strange and a proude kinde of going, they are of the bignesse of a Ducke, they have finny wings with which they swim a great pace, but cannot flie, and these are in such aboundance that you may take them up with your hands as many as you will, the egges of these Penguines was there in such aboundance as we could not almost go for them, so that we laded our boat with Seales, Penguines, and egges in two houres ; In this Bay likewise as it is credibly reported by the Flemmings, there is another Iland of Conies,[8] in as great aboundance as the other of Seales and Penguines.

Before our departure from hence we had a Sermon and a Communion one a Sunday in the forenoone, and afternoone one of our men which was a Jew, was christened and called *John*, our *Generall* being his godfather.[9]

The 29 of October we wayed our Anchors, and set saile, there being dead in the whole fleete at this time 107, and others that were sicke recovered to health.

The first of November we doubled the *Cape de bona Esperance* with great store of winde, raine, and haile.

The 26 we saw Saint *Laurence*.

The 2 of December we had so many huge and great Grampoyses about our shippe as was strange and wonderfull.[10]

The 4 of December we had great stormes which continued al day and the same night, so that we were in danger to loose some of our company.

The 16 we saw the land of *Madagascar,* and the Iland of Saint *Marie*,[11] and the next day we cast an Anchor between both landes, and sent our boats to Saint *Maries* to see what was to be gotten ; but could get nothing there but Oringes & Lemmans of which we made a good stoare of water, which is the best remedy against the scurvy, here we continued 3 or 4 dayes but could get no other things but lemmons, some hony combes, some milke, and some rice which we bought for beades, we saw but only one Cow, which they drave away as soone as they saw us, whereby we imagined they had small store. The people of this Iland are of a tall stature and very well limmed and proportioned such as we have not seene in these parts of the world, they go naked saving about their members they weare cloath made of the barkes of trees, and the women weare of the same stuffe from their breasts to their feete.

The 21 we had a mighty storme both of winde and raine, so that our ship lost an Anchor, the *Hector* let slip her Anchor, and the *Susan* broake her bow sprit, and here we were in

great danger, by reason we were in such a straight betweene two landes : here our ship was almost aboord the Admirall,[12] but God delivered us, this storme continued 12 houres very forcible, in which time two of our Admirals men fell from the maine yarde, whereof one was saved and the other drowned, and as the wind was vehement, so the aire was very thicke and misty which made it the more dangerous.

The 26 day we Anchored in the Baye of *Antogill*,[13] and the next daye our boates were sent on shoare and meeting with the people of the Country, we bought of them Rice, Lemmons & Plantons, in great quantitie and number, for we bought a measure of Rice which wayed two pounds and a halfe, for a bloud-stone, or a blew Bead, and twentie Lemmons, or twentie Plantons for a Bead. In this place they have small store of Cattell, but they went with us unto another Baye, where there was more store, of whome we bought two or three, giving five and thirtie Christall Beads for a Bullocke, and afterwards because they would sell us no more, wee went and tooke some from them perforce, giving them in Beads as we paide for the other, to the valew of ten shillings.

The first of January wee began to build our Pinnace.[14]

The 7 of January, five of the *Susans* companie, being some boyes, and some youthes, stoale away the Boate from the ships stearne, thinking to have gone to the Maine to have lived there, but by chaunce were espyed, so that they were faine to put themselves on shoare uppon a small Iland not inhabited, where they continued two or three dayes, and beeing weary of their faire and lodging, came againe aboorde, and were punished for their offences.

The 17 of January, one *Christopher Newchurch* our Surgeon of the *Ascention* poysoned himselfe, but it did not worke his death : yet was he greevously tormented for three or foure dayes, for which cause he was dismissed of his place, and should have beene left in this place a shoare, had not Maister

Havers intreated for him who tooke him into his shippe to live as an ordynary man.

The 4 day of February we had a great storme of winde and raine, which continued all day and the same night.

The 20 day Maister *Brodbancke*, Maister of the Admirall died.

The 23 day of February, Maister *Pullin* our preacher died.

The 25 day Maister Napper Maister of the vice Admirall died, and the same day one of our Admirals men being sick of the Calantur, leaped overboord and was no more seene.[15]

The 27 day being Saterday, the lamentablest accident happened, that happened since wee departed England, and thus it was, Maister *Winter* the Maisters Mate of the Admiral dying, the rest of the Captaines and Maisters went to his burial and according to the order of the sea, there was 2 or 3 great ordinances discharged at his going a shoare, but the maister gunner of the Admirall being not so carefull as he should have beene, unfortunately killed Maister *Brand* Captaine of the *Ascention* and the Boatswaines mate of the same ship, to the great danger of the Maister, his mate and another Marchant who were hurt and besprinckled with the bloud of these massacred men, so these men going to the buriall of another were themselves carryed to their own graves. Thus did we loose a man religious, wise & provident ; such a one as the whole fleete will misse, both for good husbandry, care, and good advice : Upon these alterations Roger *Haukin* was made maister of the Admirall, maister *Indeck* maister of the vice Admirall, for maister *Napper* was dead; maister *Coale* maister of the Ascention, maister *Pope* was made Captaine of the Ascention and some of the other Marchants remooved some to one ship, some to another.

The 4 day of March, wee set saile out of this tempestuous and unfortunate Baye, where there was many men died of the flixe out of the Admirall.[16] So that wee continued here two monethes and eight dayes, having for the most part every

Certaine words of their language.[17]

Tavghu, Wine	*Essa*, One
Rano, Water	*Roe*, Two.
Herinco, Fish	*Tellu*, Three
Bedehang, Beades.	*Effa*, Foure.
Kissow, a Knife.	*Demi*, Five.
Totombar, Rice.	*Ena*, Six.
Lemona, Lemons.	*Ceto*, Seven.
Eeno, Full.	*Vallo*, Eight.
Semissa, no more left.	*Civi*, Nine.
Matty, Thunder.	*Foolo*, Ten.
Sungo Funsho, ripe Plantons.	*Beginning again and reckoning to ten*

daye fearefull thunder, rain and lightenning, as the like is not heard in our countrey, for they have many slaine with the thunder which maketh them make hast to gette home before night. The people are very industrious and take great paines, both in setting of Rice which groweth there in great quantytie, so that there is whole stackes thereof, as also in beating and winnowing the same. They weave such thinges as they weare about their bodyes beeing made of the barke of trees. Their houses are but meane, standing halfe a yarde from the ground and covered with leaves, with a hoale at one ende of the same house to creepe in at on their knees. They love Wine exceedingly, with which they will bee very drunke : As there is many small townes, so there is many Governours which are known from the other, both by the reverence is given them of the people, and their ornaments of brasse Rings, and Beades : they are marvelous nimble with their Lawnces and Targets, but very fearefull of our Peeces. The chiefe Governour came

aboorde of us with his wife to dinner where we might perceive their manner of feeding to be very homely, and for their assurance of saftie, there was so many sent a shoare as came aboord, and after dinner, Captaine *Middleton* gave the principall man a thinne shute of *Manchester* stuffe, which pleased him well.

The 17 day of March, we passed the *Equinoctiall* line which is the second time that we passed it.[18]

The 30 day of March we were on the shoales of *Adu*[19] which is nine degrees to the South of the *Equinoctiall* and at the first sight of ground (being full of rockes) our ship had but 4 fadome and a halfe, here we were in great danger, being inclosed & compassed round with rocks as in a pound, and having spent 2 dayes and nights in turning and returning but could finde no way out, at the length the Pinnace was sent before to finde where there was least danger, and having found 7 or 8 fadom we all followed her and having passed this danger, we gave God the praise which had mercifully delivered us.

The 7 day of May, we had sight of *Nicombar*, which is about 40 leagues from *Sumatra*, this night following we had a great storme, and in this storme if God had not delivered us wonderfully our ship or the *Hector*, or both had suncke in the sea, being almost aboord of one another in lying of those Ilands : this night also we lost company with the Pinnace, but within 2 or 3 dayes she came to us in that harbor, here we stayed 9 or 10 dayes to water and ballast our shippes and to mount our ordinance.[20] The people of the country brought us aboord Coaker nuts, Cassado rootes, Pounceatrones, and Lemmons,[21] and some hens, but they made dainty of their hens, for they would not sell them under two Counters[22] a peece, taking them for gould, although they solde other things for olde peeces of Linnen, and small peeces of Yron hoopes, some of these people speake *Portugale*, who tolde us that the *Portugales* use to put into this harbor as they goe to *Mallacca*,

and that two *Gallions* were there two moneths before our comming thether, which had bought all the Ambergreese was to be gotten.[23]

The 18 day we set saile from hence, but by reason of fowle weather, and contrary windes, our Admirall lost his boate, and sprung a leake, and therefore would have fetched that harbor againe, but could not. So wee went to other Ilands called *Sombrai*, 10 or 12 leagues to lewward *Nicombar*.[24] Heere our *Admirall* lost an anckor, for the ground is rockie, and full of counterfeit Currall.[25] The people of this Iland goe naked, having onely their privities bound up in a narrow peece of Linnen cloath, which commeth about their middle like a girdell, and so betweene their twist[26] : they are of a tawnie couler, they annoint their faces with divers coulers, they are well limmed, but very fearefull, for they would neither come aboord our ships, nor come into our boates : There groweth in this Iland Trees, that for the taleness, greatness, and straightness thereof, they will serve the biggest Shippe in our Fleete for a maine Maste, and the Iland is full of these Trees.

Heere likewise we did finde upon the Sandes a small twigge growing up greene like a young tree, and offering to pull the same up it shrinketh into the ground, and sincketh, unless you holde very harde, but beeing pulled up, a great worme groweth about the roote thereof, very strange to see, of these I gathered many.[27] We departed from hence the 29 of this moneth.

The 2 of June, we anckored in the roade of *Dachen*, where wee had of the countrie people came aboorde of us with their Canows, greater then any wee had seene before, having rafters of each side of them, so that they cannot sincke.[28]

The next day, there came some of the Factors for the Flemmings aboorde of us, to welcome us into that Countrey.[29] And the same daye our *Vize Admirall* went a shoare to the King,[30] with a message from our Generall, accompanied with

Maister *Salter*, Maister *Janverme*, and Maister *Grove*,[31] who hearing of their landing, sent them Elephants to ride to his court, where they were kindlie entertained, and giving to the Vize-Admirall, a Roabe and a Tucke of Callico imbrodered with golde.[32]

The 4 of June being Saterday, the Generall went on shoare, accompanied with Captaine *Havers*, Captaine *Pope*, and many other Marchants, to deliver the Queenes letter, and to give him presents, which were a Bason & Ewer of silver, a standing cup of silver, a Head-peece, a paire of Hangers, a Fanne of Fethers, & a Looking-glasse : these being delivered by the Marchants, none pleased him so well as the Fanne of Feathers, with which hee caused his women to Fanne him. First at the Generals landing, the Flemmings mette him and carried him to their house, where he stayed untill the King sent for him : In the meane while there came a Noble-man called *Curcon*, who would have received her Majesties letter to have delivered it to the King, but our Generall refused to deliver it to any, but to the King himselfe. Then did the King send sixe Elephants for the Generall and his attendants, whereof there was one Elephant which was the greatest that carried a Cannopie covered with Redde cloath, in which Cannopie was a peece of Silke, and a peece of cloath of gold to carrie her Majesties letter in, and upon this Elephant none did ride but he that carried the letter.[33] The Generall ridde uppon another with a guide before him, and uppon the rest some did ride and some did not, for it is very uneasie riding uppon them, their backes are so broade, and they so great and tall.

The King did likewise send his Trumpets and other Musicke which played before the Generall to the Courte, and there was twentie other that carried streamers of silke of divers coulours, according to that countrie manner. So the Generall entering into the first gate of the Court rested himselfe there, untill the King had notice of his comming, who

presently sent for him, and foure other of the principall men about the Generall, who when they had brought him to the King, came backe for the presents, which were carryed in by the Marchants appointed for that purpose.

And after they had passed three courtes, they came into a place covered with Cannopies, adjoyning to the Kings Gallerie, where the King satte, and after they had given *Doulat* to the King,[34] and the King resaluted them according to their Countrie fashion, which is by lifting both the handes above their heads, they satte down to dinner, where they had great cheere, and to the number of two or three hundreth severall dishes of meate, baked, roasted, and boyled : the Dishes and Cuppes wherein they were served, were most of goulde, and of a metall much like to Bell mettall, which is dearer than goulde, every dishe covered, some with *Purslain* of *China*. Their drinke is called *Aracke*, and is verye strong, and is not to bee drunke without water, yet that which is generally drunke in the countrie, is nothing so strong, nor so wholesome.

The King asked our Generall if our Queene were married, & how long she had raigned, which when the Generall had answered by his interpretor, the King wondred.[35] The King likewise told the Generall, if the words in her Majesties letter came from the hart, he had cause to thinke well thereof. Dinner being ended, the King caused his Damsels to daunce, and his women to play Musicke unto them, who were richly adorned with Bracelets and Jewels, and this was a great favour : for hee dooth not usually let them be seene to any. The King did likewise give unto our Generall a fine white Roabe, and a Tucke, imbrodered with gold very richly : also a great Girdell and two Crises,[36] all which one of his Noble-men put on in the Kings presence, and in this manner hee departed the Court and went aboord ; and the King sent him aboorde a Bullocke, and great store of fresh fish. So that to conclude, he did receive hir Majesties letter with great kindnesse, and entertained our

Generall with greater state then hee is accustomed to doe to other nations, as wee might perceive by divers Embassadors that came thether whilest we were there.

The 5 of June Captaine *Pope* went a shoare for one of our men which was left in the town all night by his owne negligence, for the Generall did feare because hee spoake *Portugale*, and that there were *Portingalls* in the towne, that hee might make knowne unto them some-thing which might bee prejudiciall to the Fleete.[37] Maister *Pope* dined this day with the King, who gave him a Heyffer to carrie aboorde with him.

The 7 day of June, after the Generall had licence under the Kings hand both for the safe landing of all our marchandise, without paying any custome or toale, as also that we might buy & sell of the country people, without let or molestation : then did Captaine *Havers*, Maister *Pope*, *Henry Middleton*, & Maister *Starkey* take a house, wherin to lay their Marchandise.

The 8 day of June, the Generall went a shoare to lodge there.

The 11 day of June, the King did annoint the Generall with ritch oyntment, and called him his sonne.

About this time one *Thorougood* in our Admirall was araigned, and found guiltie of mutiny and comtempe, and therefore was condemned to bee hanged ; but by great intreaty he was forgiven.

The 13 day the Generall went to the young Prince, which dwelleth halfe a mile from his father, and the Generall gave him a peece of plate, a paire of hangers and a sworde, the Prince entertained him kindely, gave him a roabe and a crises, and gave unto them which came in with him tuckes of callico Lawne.[38]

The 17 day of June, one *Curcon* a principall man in that countrie & divers others, came aboord our ships to see them,

but especially to see the *Susan*, whom the Generall had offered to the King to sell, for a certaine quantity of Pepper,[39] but could not agree, so after they had banqueted aboord the Admirall, and dyned aboorde the vice Admirall, they departed with a peale of ordinance.[40]

The 19 day the Admirall received a boates lading of Pepper which was the first was bought, the price was 64 Rialles of eight the Bahar, which is of our waight, reckoning two hundred Catties to a Bahar and every Catty thirty one Ounces, is three hundred eighty seven pound and a halfe, five score to the hundred.[41]

During the time we were at *Dachem* the King desired to have our Pinnace go to Pedeir, accompanyed with a Portugalles frigat, to take if they might rovers at sea, which did rob his subjectes, and did send to the valew of 100 Markes in golde, for those that should be imployed in that businesse, and because the General sent the Pinnace with 14 or 15 men (of whome *Gabriel Towerson* was Captaine) but did no service.[42] Therefore the Generall would have given the King that mony againe but hee would not receive it by any meanes, saying what hee gave, he gave, and would not take againe.[43]

And at the same time there was seven or eight hundred houses burnt at sundry times in *Dachem* while we were there.

Therefore the Generall bought an olde stone house builte it and covered it with slate, and at our comming awaye gave it the king, the ground & house cost almost 100 pound starling.[44]

The Generall having intelligence of the price and goodnesse of Pepper at *Priaman* and seeing the smal quantity that was to be gotten at *Dachem*, sent the *Susan* thether with our small Pinnace to bring news of her successe, and because Captaine *Havers* was lately dead, *Henry Middleton* was appointed Cape Marchant in his place.[45]

The 24 daye of June there came into the road of *Dachem* a Flemmish Pinnace which had lost her Admiral, of which

Fleete one *Spilbacke* of Middlebourough was Generall, shee was of the burthen of fifty tunne, and had but three men and two boyes in her, which Pinnace our General bought, for they mistrusted they should not heare of their Generall againe.[46]

There came also into the roade of *Dachem* a great shippe of Saint Mallos in Fraunce of the burthen of foure hundred tunne. The Generall his name was *Mounser de Bardeler*, they lost their vice Admirall by Shipwracke uppon the *Maldevs* & departed from Dachem for France with about 14 tunne of Pepper, some smale quantity of Sinamon, and some Indico, so that he had not halfe of his lading.[47]

The 8 day of September, came into this roade two flemish ships from *Seylon* with Sinamon unto whome did belong the Pinnace that our Generall bought, and because our Generall had resolved to goe for Malacca, he did take the Admirall of the flemmings with him being about 200 tunne and very well manned, and in consideration thereof to have the 8th part of what was taken, & for our owne fleete the General had compounded that the company should have the sixt part.[48]

The 11 day of September, our *Admiral*, *vice Admirall*, *Rear Admirall*, & the flemish ship and Pinnace departed hence for the straightes of *Malacca* our generall dangerously sicke. Captain Pope dyed. During the time of the Generalles absence, the French men had raised the price of Pepper, from 24 Tayes the Bahar to 27 and 30 and 32 so that we were forced to buy some of that price.

The 3 day of October, being in the straites of *Mallacca* the *Hector* espyed a great ship towardes evening which came from S. *Thoma*,[49] & was bound for *Malacca*, and the next morning yeelded themselves without any resistance, or so much as any one man hurt, this day we beganne to unlade her, and had out of hir 950 packes of Calico, and Pentadoes, besides many great chestes with Marchandise, all which was upon her orlops,[50] But her hould was full of Rice, and because of a

storme, that did arise we were forced to leave hir with that great aboundance of Rice, and with store of victuals as Porke, Butter, Cheese, Ruske, conserves, suckets, hens in pickle, hens preserved with store of Sinamon water, and palmeto Wine[51] : the name of this ship was the Saint *Anthony*, and of the burthen of 700 tun : and it was strange to see the number of men, women and children that were in her not so few as 600 persons whereof there was but a few Portingalles, the rest passengers and People of these countries. And in 6 dayes we had discharged her of the best of her lading, and would have taken more if we had time and place.[52]

Thus our fleeted returning to *Dachin* the 28 of October, our Generall gave order, for the shipping as well of such marchandise as came out of England and was unsould, as also all such Pepper, and Sinnamon as was bought in the absence of the fleete, and made what speede possible might bee for our departures thence. At this time came our Pinnace from *Priaman* with letters to our Generall, where was good newes, both for the price and quantity of Pepper, uppon the receite whereof the Generall sent the Pinnace which we bought of the flemmings to *Priaman*, with some of the prised goodes and other commodities.

The King of this Countrey is very ritch in treasure, and strong in the number of men, he hath great store of Ordinance of Brasse, and those verye great and Massey,[53] their Lawes are severely inflicted upon them that offend, either by delivering them to the *Elephantes* to be devoured or cutting of their Noses, and eares, according to the haynousnesse of the offence.[54] They bury their dead with great solemnitie, & mourne over their graves certaine dayes, setting up at each end of their Graves either one or two stones, carved according to the abilitie of the person, and they are buryed together in families. The people are verye subtill and cunning in bargaining, and unconstant in all their wordes, for they will

sell one thing to divers men, and take earnest of them all ; and if another will give any thing more, he shall have it. Their coyne is goulde and lead, that of goulde they call *Masse*, sixe of them for a Royall of eight : Those of Lead they call *Cashe*, whereof 2100 maketh a *Masse*, so that a *Copaine* is the fourth part of a *Masse*, being 525 *Cashe*,[55] for which you may buy Hearbes and Fruites, and Fishe : every daye in the weeke is a market day for victualls, not so much as Friday which they call their Good-day ; but they keepe no shoppes open for Marchandize on that daye. There is great store of Hennes, Buffles and Bullockes, yet very deare, a Henne at nine pence or twelve pence, Buffels at two Tayes and a halfe, which is thirtie shillings starling, Egges, eighteene or twentie for nine pence : and at our comming away, fourteene for nine pence : Rice is brought from other places thether, as good Marchandize, and is solde by the *Bambue*, sixe or seaven *Bambues* for nine pence, every *Bambue* being an Ale quarte ; So that in this place there is neither marchandize nor any thing else good cheape of it selfe, the countrie is very unwholsome, that almost it may said of it, as is said of *Malacca*, fewe come thether, but eyther loose hide or hayre : heere we lost ten or twelve men out of our ship. There are Elephants in greater number and bigger stature, then in any of those parts, which are the chiefe strength of this land, the greatest is ruled with a little Boye, having a sticke with a hooke at the end, and is of the greatest understanding of any beast living *:* as for their strength, I did see one drawe the Kings Frigat laden with Pepper, which was a ground, being ten or twelve tunne, very easilie. The King taketh pleasure to see them fight, as likewise in Cock-fighting, at which game they lay a hundred pound, or a hundred & fiftie pound Starling on a Cockes head. Their Shippes, Sayles, Mastes, Anchors, and Cables, are all of wood.[56]

When we were ready to depart this Roade, we had a hundred and foure-score men dead in the whole Fleete.

Malies speech, such as is used *in these* Indies.[57]

1. *Satu.*
2. *Dua.*
3. *Tiga.*
4. *Umpat.*
5. *Lema.*
6. *Nam.*
7. *Toufours.*
8. *Delapan.*
9. *Simbalan.*
10. *Sapula.*
11. *Sablas.*
12. *Duo blas.*
13. *Tiga blas.*
14. *Umpat blas*, &c.

100. *Saratus.*

1000. *Sariba.*

Pege, Goe.

Marre, Come hether.

Barapa, How sell you.

Iam, A Henne.

Tellor, Egges.

Deduc, Sit downe.

Mana pege, whether go you.

Harry, A day

Campan, A Ship.

Praw, A Boate.

Baraff, Rice.

Ladda, Pepper.

Ladda sula, White Pepper.

Tanna, Earth.

Roma, A house.

Macan, Eate.

Babbe, Porcke.

Pedang, A Sword

Cheremin, A Glasse.

Baick, Good.

Teda baick, Not good.

Carron, A bagge.

Tally, A Corde.

Suda, Quickly.

Rotan, that which they bind their houses with.

Isuc, To morrow.

Bree, Give me.

Cring, Drye.

Aire, Water.

Appe, Fire.

Attowan, Sir.

Roge, Sultan, the King.

Taw, I understand you.

Tida tau, I do not understand.

Gyngo, A Jewes Harpe.

Sussu, Milke.

The 11 of November we wayed anchor altogether, and the 13 of the same moneth, we parted with our Generall and Vize-Admirall, they went to *Priaman* where the *Susan* did lade, and from thence to *Bantam* (for there is the best saile for such commodities as were taken in the Prize, of any place in all the Indies) and we for England : *Deus vortat bene.*[58]

The 11 of December we had the Moonsoon or trade winde, and so continued sayling before the winde unto first of Januarie, after which time wee found the winde variable, being in the height of 20 degrees to the South of the line.[59]

The 11 of January having a storme in the night, we had sixe *Corpus Sanctus*, so called by the *Portingals* ; whereof three were upon our Maine top Maste head, two on our foretop, and one upon our flagge staffe, they seemed to us to be as bigge as the biggest Starres, and are never seen but in stormes, and vanish away before the storme endeth *:* if they be seene in the cheanes or shrowds of the ship, it is a signe the storme is of longer continuance, if in the highest toppes, it is likewise a signe the storme is ended, and so we found it for certain.[60]

About this time our Maister Gunner, and an other of the Gunner roome dyed.

The 13 day we saw two Marmaides, and as we judged them, they were Male and Female, because the Mosse of one of their heads was longer then the other, their heades are very round, and their hinder parts are devided like two legges, they say they are signes of stormy weather ; and so we found it, For the 17 day following we had a great storme with a contrary winde which continued 4 dayes.[61]

The 22 the French ship which we left at *Dachem* overtooke us, being in the height of 33 and a halfe[62] and about 250 or 300 leagues from *Cape de bona Esperance* who was glad of our company, both in regard their ship was so leake, that they were faine to pumpe almost continually, as also they had hope

to be releeved of us with victualles for they had nothing but Rice and water : we caught daylie for sixe weekes space great store of fish more then we coulde eate, as of *Albecores*, *Bonitos* and *Dolphins*.[63]

From the 22 to the 30 we had a faire winde at E.S.E. On which day being in 34 and a halfe we had a great storme, and as it was great, so it was suddaine before we could take in our sailes which maketh them dangerous, wee laye at Hull two dayes, after which time we had a faire winde at E. and by S. being about 60 leagues from *Cape de bona Esperance*.

The 3 of February one of our men going to the toppe mast head espied the *Cape de bona*, &c. as also two Holland shippe,[64] to our great joye and comfort, for whome we stayed, and whereas before, the French and we had resolved to goe into *Soldania* road the next morning, by reason of their company, we shapte our course for S. *Hellena*.

These two ships had been at *Pœtania* where they laded pepper, and at the *Molucos* where they had Cloves, & upon the coast of *China* where they bought Silkes both raw & twisted, so that their lading was very rich.[65] The Admiral being of the burthen of 600 tun, and the other 200 tun, both well appointed with men and Ordinance, saving that some of their men were sicke, and when we had toulde them that our Admirall, and vice Admirall, were gone to *Bantam*, they tould us of a certaine they should soone be laden, and at a low price, for they came from thence, and at their first comming thether, the Countrey thought they had come thither to buy Pepper, but when they sawe they were laden already, they would have soulde it for any price, so that in regarde of the Marchandise our Generall carryeth with him (which is the prize goodes) and the great quantytie of Peper which they have no means to utter, there is no doubt by the grace of God, but they shall bee laden good cheape, and in verye short time, Amen.

The 20 daye of Februarye wee had sight of Sainte *Hellena* and the twentye one daye wee anchored in the roade, where wee delivered unto the French-men, and unto the Hollanders such victualles to relieve them as we could spare, which was sixe hogsheades of Porke, two hundredth of Stock-fish, one hogshead of beanes, and five hundred of bread, whereof the hollanders were in great want. This Iland is not an earthly Paradice as it is reported, but it is a place of good water, & some Lemmon trees, & Fig trees, planted by the Portingalles, & great stoare of goates and hogges, and part-ridges, but not be to gotten without great labour and paines, for they are wilde, and the Iland full of great high hilles. The greatest refreshing in this place is fish in great aboundance, so that all our shippes have taken in one day foure hundred fish, here did one *Moore* die, which was one of our Maister his mates, he was sicke ever since we came from *Dachin*.

The 9 day of March, the French-men departed this roade.[66]

The 14 day of March, the Generall of the flemmings Anchor came home, which caused us to depart thence the same day, for their men were well recovered and refreshed.

The 21 day of March, we had sight of the *Ascention* Iland which lyeth in eight degrees to the South of the *Equinoctiall*.

The 28 and 29 very little winde.

The 30 day of March, we passed the *Equinoctiall* line, with a fine gale which is the fourth time we passed it.

The first of April calme.

The 3, 4 and 5 very calme, much raine, and the winde very mutable beeing in 2 degrees to the North-ward of the line.

The 6, 7, 8 and 9 a fresh gaile.

The 21 day of Aprill, we entered the *Saragoß* sea being in 19 degrees.

The 25 day we passed the Tropickes, the same day one of our men died.

The last day of Aprill wee were in 30 degrees, and the next day we had a great gaile with some raine.

The 15 day of May, we were in 40 degrees and in the height of *Flore*, and *Corves*, heere the windes were variable and very colde.[67]

The 25 day we saw a small ship but could not speake with her.

The first of June, we were in 44 degrees ⅓ having a good gaile of winde at the South-west, we holding our course North-east.

The 5 day we sounded, and found ground at 94 fadome.

The eight day of June,[68] we had sight of the *Lizard*,
and so with out stay to the Downes, & from
thence into the river to Woolwich,[69]
God be praysed for it, and
send the rest home
in safety.

Certaine words of *Pegu* language.[70]

Mugaru, what call you it.
Kidnan tivan, Give mee bread.
Fegoe, a Catte.
Boon, A Knife.
Tobacu, A Pen.
Slappoit, A Booke.
Pappoit, A Table booke.
Memuru, What is your name?
Talla, A Chest.
Tene, A Pillow.
Tayongabalon, a Maste.
Pomeé, Breeches.
Cheochum, Stockins.
Botoway, A Thombe.
Toway, A fist.
Cadup, A head.
Suck, haire of the head.
Slagota, The eare.
Yu, *yu*, I, I.
Moa t, eyes.
Tegla, By and by.
Ciniaut, Let me see.
Catu, the Moone.
Shenon, A Starre.
Yacata, The morning.
Keka, Good.
Kecho, sit downe.
Cacadoe, The palme of the head.
Sanimbodoway, the naile of the hand.
Nepóe, Sir.
Mucherow, how sell you.
Cabang, A Ship.
Aw, *aw*, what say you?
Braw, A Woman.
True, A Man
Fekeé, *A Whoore.*
Oiara, I will goe.
Tamonra, Farewell.
Keag, God.
Cling, *Clang*, Much.
Nung, *nung*, come hither.
Cooke, Come hither.
Cleá, Dogge.
Kleg, A Hogge.
Togatu, Noone.
Daick, Water.
Carrow toway, wash hands.
Ksole, To spit.
Stcake, Sleepe
Notada, Arise.
Tarangcatu, A doore.
Poctarang, open the dore.
Dotarang, shut the dore.
Chulay, let it downe.
Downang, Take up.
Cle, Bite.

~ A note of the mens names *deceased out of the* DRAGON[71]

1	*William Thomson.*	24	*John Judson.*
2	*Job: Harket.*	25	*William Barker.*
3	*William Allin.*	26	*William Barret.*
4	*Raphe Arden.*	27	*William Ridge.*
5	*Christopher Scot.*	28	*Ralphe Salter.*
6	*Edward Major.*	29	*Jeremy Gause.*
7	*Thomas May.*	30	*Henry Thickpenny.*
8	*John Pegoune.*	31	*Henry Brigges.*
9	*John Johnson.*	32	*Rice Williams.*
10	*Philip Salisbury.*	33	*Martine Topsaile.*
11	*Edmund Davies.*	34	*M. Willi. Bradbanke.*
12	*Richard Joanes.*	35	*Richard Androwes.*
13	*Daniell Richardson.*	36	*M. Tho: Pullen, preach.*
14	*John Clackson.*	37	*Jeames Fullar.*
15	*Robert Poppe.*	38	*William Winter.*
16	*John Webbe.*	39	*William Hall.*
17	*John Humber.*	40	*John Hankin.*
18	*William Burrowes.*	41	*Richard Exame.*
19	*Mathew Perchet.*	42	*Robert Hill.*
20	*Edward Keall.*	43	*John Woodall.*
21	*Nicholas Williams.*	44	*John Jeane.*
22	*Peter Bennet.*	45	*Robert Keachinman.*
23	*Leonard Nichols.*	46	*Jeames Caverly.*

47	*Robert Dame.*	57	*John Hope.*
48	*John Trincall.*	58	*Edward Baddiford.*
49	*John Duke.*	59	*Thomas Price.*
50	*Martaine Cornelison.*	60	*Phillip Goulding.*
51	*Launslet Taylor.*	61	*Roger Morrice.*
52	*John Settell.*	62	*Stephen Burdall.*
53	*William Burrowes.*	63	*Nicholas Ragwood.*
54	*Percevall Stradling.*	64	*George Wattes.*
55	*John Harrice.*	65	*Myles Berry.*
56	*Frauncis Pormoth.*	66	*William Mounke.*

A note of the mens names
deceased out of the
HECTOR.

1	*John Robinson.*	11	*Edward Holte.*
2	*Thomas Dassell.*	12	*Richard Marshall.*
3	*Jeames Jefferes.*	13	*John Ossever.*
4	*Morrice Webbe.*	14	*Morrice Hammont.*
5	*Mathew Starkey.*	15	*Thomas Wilkinson.*
6	*John Middleton.*	16	*William Jones.*
7	*Thomas Appollow.*	17	*Edmund Faurcliffe.*
8	*John Fishaker.*	18	*Roger Moore.*
9	*George Parsons.*	19	*Robert Ashplie.*
10	*Walter Cobbe.*	20	*Peter Johnson.*

21	*Adam Children.*	30	*Thomas Pinchbanke.*
22	*Robert Burche.*	31	*Rowland Hils.*
23	*Henry Great.*	32	*Oliver Adams.*
24	*Nicholas Franke.*	33	*John Endick, Maister.*
25	*Willliam Predam.*	34	*John Russell.*
26	*Emanuel Sims.*	35	*John Martin.*
27	*John Harris.*	36	*John Coman.*
28	*Maist. Henry Napper.*	37	*John Holliday.*
29	*Christopher Cadde.*		

A note of the mens names
deceased out of the
ASCENTION.

1	*William Leake.*	12	*John Griffeth.*
2	*William Pizing.*	13	*Michaell Nicholson.*
3	*William Whitting.*	14	*John Fare.*
4	*Gabriell Stone.*	15	*Thomas Daurell.*
5	*William Hambling.*	16	*John Rowe.*
6	*Edward Carricke.*	17	*Robert Double.*
7	*Arnold Malyn.*	18	*Robert Cooper.*
8	*William Morgan.*	19	*John Hampton.*
9	*Robert Savadge.*	20	*Thomas Cocklim.*
10	*John Verker.*	21	*William Betty.*
11	*Richard Burrice.*	22	*Robert Batman.*

23	*John Badby.*	31	*Methewsaleh Mountjoy.*
24	*Richard Horton.*	32	*William Brund, Capt.*
25	*John Syclemore.*	33	*Thomas Ward.*
26	*William Williamson.*	34	*Thomas Scriven.*
27	*Richard Hamond.*	35	*William Maler.*
28	*Thomas Everet.*	36	*Robert Pope, Captain.*
29	*Augustin Jordan.*	37	*John Reddoe.*
30	*Thomas Way.*	38	*Thomas Salter.*

A note of the mens names
deceased out of the
SUSAN.

1	*Henry Page.*	13	*Richard Bowyer.*
2	*Christopher Scult.*	14	*Michaell Allen.*
3	*John Church.*	15	*Richard Smally.*
4	*John Foster.*	16	*Thomas Wilson.*
5	*Edward Seely.*	17	*Richard Spencer.*
6	*Martaine Joxes.*	18	*Thomas Joanes.*
7	*Gilbert Crippin.*	19	*Jeames Sket.*
8	*Richard Pope.*	20	*Richard Whitehead.*
9	*John Smith.*	21	*Robert Michel.*
10	*Marchus Floud.*	22	*John Earle.*
11	*Nicholas Sims.*	23	*Christopher Androws.*
12	*Edward Steele.*	24	*Jacob Johnson.*

25	*Anthony Younger.*
26	*Robert Powell.*
27	*John Bishop.*
28	*Morgan Priddis*
29	*William Haward.*
30	*Richard Sprat.*
31	*Henry Johnson.*
32	*Richard Egleston.*
33	*Jeames Upgrave.*
34	*John Goulding.*
35	*John Browne.*
36	*John Haward, Cap.*
37	*Phillip Winscombe.*
38	*John Samon.*
39	*John Fousticke.*

FINIS.

NOTES

1 Took a Portingall : from 1585 to 1604 England fought an intermittent war against Spain and Portugal, at that time joined under the Habsburgh monarchy. This gave the fleet diplomatic cover for its attack on Portuguese merchant shipping, which in turn presaged centuries of ambiguity between crown and company. Initially at least, the merchants in London sought profit from state-sponsored piracy as much as trade, just as Queen Elizabeth expected political advantage as much as revenue from an English presence in distant oceans. This uneasy symbiosis continued throughout the long life and many incarnations of the Company.

The unfortunate vessel hailed from Viana do Castello. The English took from her 164 butts of wine, 12 barrels and 176 jars of oil, 55 hogsheads, and vats of meal. There is no mention of goods beyond foodstuffs, nor any further record of her fate.

In their letter from St. Helena, Roger Style and Edward Highlord added, '... wee tooke a ship of Vianna, bound for Brasill, of the burthen of 130 tunne. Her lading was wine, oyle, and meale, which hath stood us in great steede in this our voyage. Five or sixe dayes after, we turned her off, after we had pillaged her as we thought good.'

2 We cast off the Guift : the *Gift* was a pinnace of 120 tons that the fleet used as a 'victualler', which carried food and supplies to extend the range of the other four ships. Apparently it was always intended to be abandoned. The pinnace was stripped of its rigging and other useful items, then left as a hulk in the Atlantic.

3 Soldania 16 leagues from the Cape de bona Esperance : in fact, the fleet anchored in Table Bay, not modern Saldanha Bay ('Soldania'). The confusion may have arisen when Joris van Spilbergen landed at the latter place in 1602, then named it for Antonio Saldanha, though that Portuguese captain had actually landed at Table Bay in 1503.

Their true location is clear from the description. The author said they were 16 leagues (80 kilometers) north of the Cape of Good Hope in a countryside 'full of pleasant rivers' (in fact they were 150 kilometers north-northeast). Saldanha Bay, though, is 260 kilometers from 'Bona

Esperance' in dry, barren country. Moreover, the Purchas narrator said that behind their anchorage '... standeth a very high hill, flat like a table, and is called the Table.'

4 In great danger : square-rigged ships required large numbers of sailors to do manually what was later done with engines. If enough sailors fell sick or died, the ship became '... so weake of men that they could hardly handle the sayles'. This was particularly dangerous near a lee shore because these vessels had very limited ability to sail upwind.

The fleet had been plagued with poor wind for much of its voyage. This was largely due to its delayed departure, which meant they missed the best season to sail southwards in the Atlantic. The Purchas narrator stated : 'Now by reason of our long being under the Line (which proceeded of our late comming out of England, for the time of the yeare was too farre spent by six or seven weekes to make a quicke navigation), many of our men fell sicke.'

At the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope (35° S), the winds were initially favourable. Then they turned contrary for over two weeks. The Purchas narrator wrote : 'For now the few whole men we had beganne also to fall sicke; so that our weaknesse of men was so great that in some of the ships the merchants tooke their turnes at the helme, and went into the top to take in the topsayles, as the common mariners did.'

Aboard the *Dragon*, Lancaster had kept his crew healthier by giving them rations of citrus juice to ward off scurvy. After bringing all ships to anchor he quickly built a medical camp on shore, using sails to make tents. With bed-rest, the commander's remaining supply of lemon-water, and fresh provisions bought from local people, only four or five more sailors died. They had lost 105 at sea.

5 A kind of clacking with the tongue : this indicates the people were likely Khoisan rather than Bantu.

6 A small Iland : Robben Island, named by the Dutch for the seals that abounded there.

7 Thither did the general fed 6 sheep : encouraging livestock and edible plants along distant sailing routes was a common practice of European mariners. Any stricken crew was allowed to take advantage of this aid. Regardless of wars which plagued Europe, sailors of all nations shared a bond created by the severity of the sea.

8 Conies : usually meaning rabbits, but here referring to the rock-badgers (*Procavia capensis*), hence its Dutch name, Dassen Eiland.

9 A Jew, was christened and called John : François Pyrard later met this man in the Maldives. He said his name was Poccaca, and he was '... a Jew in faith and race, and knew a large number of languages; among others, he spoke Arabic and the Indian tongues well. He was a man of Barbary, and the greatest scoundrel in the world. The English had taken him to England, where he had learnt English well. ... With the English he was of their religion; with the Mahometans, of theirs; whereas all the while a Jew. He married a wife wherever he happened to be, and thus he had four or five wives in India.' (Pyrard 1887, vol. 1, p. 283) The Frenchman accused 'Poccaca' of various acts of theft and deception, including stealing '... twelve or fifteen hundred pieces of forty sols Spanish' from Lancaster. How much of this was true is impossible to say. While one should be skeptical of religious prejudice in the early modern period (or any other), it was also true that the East Indies routinely attracted some truly alarming scoundrels.

10 Grampoyses : very likely *Orcinus orca,* or killer whales.

11 Iland of Sainte Marie : Nosy Boraha Island, 17° S, 50° E.

12 Aboord the Admirall : the 'Admiral' here refers not to the commanding officer but to the *Dragon* as the lead ship of the fleet.

13 Baye of Antogill : 16° S, 50° E, on the northeast coast of Madagascar.

14 We began to build our Pinnace : a pinnace could be a substantial vessel like the abandoned *Gift*, or else a smaller boat that was carried aboard in pieces to be assembled after crossing more violent regions of the ocean. With fore-and-aft sails, these were much more maneuverable than square-rigged merchant ships, and were heavily used for navigation, exploration, lading, and in-shore work. The one assembled by the crew of the *Ascension* was 18-tons burden and capable of sailing alone across the Indian Ocean.

15 Calantur : Foster calls this a fever, but in fact it was more a psychiatric condition caused by the stress of sailing, likely made worse by cramped conditions and tropical heat. A 19th century source defined *calanture* as : 'A disease of sailors from desire of land, when they are said to throw themselves into the sea, taking it for green fields. Sp. *calentura*, a fever,

warmth; *calentar*, to heat Latin *calidus*, hot.' (Wedgewood, Hensleigh. *A Dictionary of English Etymology* [1878]). A number of similar cases appear in ships' logs from the early modern period. Also note that the original text had this entry's date as 23 February, which duplicated the previous entry. In the present text it has been altered to the 25th, which Foster believes is correct.

16 Died of the flixe : dysentery, also spelled 'flux'. Though people understood that it came from polluted water, they had no effective cure. During their 70 days in Antogil Bay, at least 15 men died, primarily of this disease. John Davis said the bay was '... a place of very uncertine and contagious weather, for raine, thunder, and lightning, as ever I came in, and very unwholsome, for we lost many men here.'

17 Certaine words : the language is old Malagasy.

18 The 17 day of March : the 1603 text has, 'the 17. day of Aprill'. Foster believes that the following entry ('the 30. day of March') was the error, but this is not possible giving sailing distances between Madagascar, the Chagos, and the Nicobars. If they were in the Chagos on 30 March, they could not have reached the Nicobars a week later, especially considering that the Purchas narrator said they experienced 'variable winds' during April. This is consistent with the monsoon, in which southwest winds do not fully arrive in the Bay of Bengal until May. It is also consistent with sailing times in other ships' logs. The present text has been corrected.

The fleet likely took a northeasterly course upon leaving Madagascar to avoid southeasterly trade winds. Near the equator, they may have found weak westerlies that allowed them to turn east-by-south.

19 Shoals of Adu : the Chagos Archipelago. Located south of the Maldives around 6° S, 72° E, these atolls are spread over 20,000 square kilometers of ocean. Most have sunk below sea level, but some reefs are awash and eight islands exist. Given the sailing distances cited, it seems the fleet had actually entered the Grand Chagos Bank, which at 180 kilometers across is the largest atoll in the world.

20 Mount our ordinance : that is, to prepare their cannons and guns. During the long sea journey the fleet would have sailed with its gunports securely closed. Even deck guns were likely removed to keep the space clear for sailing. Near Malacca, however, Lancaster could expect

conflict with the Portuguese as well as Asian powers and pirates. It was also standard practice to fire a cannonball into the sea when one encountered unidentified ships as a warning to approach cautiously.

21 Coaker nuts, Cassado rootes, Pounceatrones : coconuts, cassava, and pomelos (*Citrus maxima*).

22 Two Counters a peece : counters were imitation coins often used for gambling. These seem to have been made of brass.

23 Amber-Greese : ambergris is a rare, waxy substance formed in the digestive tracts of sperm whales. It was prized for use as a fixative in perfumes. Until the spread of commercial whaling, it was mainly collected by local people when it washed up on land, thus providing an early point of contact between remote shores and the wider world.

24 Ilands called Sombrai : the Purchas narrator wrote that upon leaving the Nicobar Islands the fleet encountered a southwest gale. They attempted to sail against it, 'But beating up and downe, our ships fell into two leakes, so that wee were forced to goe to the iland of Sombrero, some ten or twelve leagues to the northward of Nicubar.' The fleet probably sought shelter in the lee northeast of Nancowry, Trinkat and Camorta Islands, across the Sombrero Channel from Little Nicobar Island.

25 Counterfeit Curral : the meaning is unclear, but could refer to non-reef-building corals in the order Corrallimorpharia. The Purchas narrator wrote that it '... cut our cable asunder, so that we could not recover our anchor.'

26 Betweene their twist : in Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionaire of the French and English Tongues* (1611), under the entry for *Fourcheure* he remarks, 'A forkiness or forkedness; a fork-like division or cleaving; also, that part of the bodie from whence the thighes doe part (I think we call it the Twist.)'

27 A great worme : in the 1870s Clements Markham inquired about this animal to Mr. Warneford, a chaplain in the Andaman Islands, and to Mr. Homfray, the officer in charge of the Nicobar Islands. They confirmed its existence but could only speculate that it was a 'coralliferous polyp'. (Markham 1877, p. 73) Possibly it was a sea pen such as *Virgularia juncea*, or another species of the order Pennatulacea.

28 Dachen : Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra. The word is a corruption of a Portuguese pronunciation, as in, *o porto de Achen*, or *d'Achen*. The canoes described have dual outriggers which are still standard in Indonesia.

During early European ventures, this sultanate was an important place for finding pepper. It may have also been favoured for its relative stability, though this was often achieved at the price of strict discipline from Muslim rulers like Iskander Muda (r. 1607–36). Better sources of pepper were found relatively soon after the Dutch and English arrived. Aceh's usefulness as a port was replaced by Malaca, while Sumatra became politically fragmented. The sultanate regained some favour under a series of queens who reigned between 1641 and 1699. These *sultanas* deftly managed rivalries between wealthy local merchants, or *orangkaya*.

29 Factors for the Flemmings : the Dutch were already established in Aceh, though they had long been preceded by an array of Asian traders from Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Bengal, Malabar, Pegu, Tenasserim, Kedah, Melaka, Pattani, Siam, China, Persia, Arabia and elsewhere.

30 The King : the ruler of Aceh in 1602 was Sultan Alauddin Ri'ayat Syah Sayyid al-Mukammal. He had risen from his youth as a fisherman to become commander of Aceh's military, then married into royalty and killed off rivals to became sultan. He was said to be over 100 years old when the English arrived, while other dates suggest he was merely in his 90s. John Davis called him, '... a lustie man, but exceeding grosse and fat', though under his rule Aceh was strong, diverse, and relatively prosperous. Sultan Alauddin Ri'ayat Syah died in 1604.

31 Maister Salter, Maister Janverme, and Maister Grove : Salter was a merchant aboard the *Ascension*. Janverme was Nathaniel Gamrym (or Gamram, or Jamryn), a merchant from the *Dragon*. Regarding Maister Grove, Foster writes : 'Philip Grove, a Dutch pilot, sometimes called Philip de Grave. He was master of the *Dragon* on the Second Voyage. In 1608 he went out to India as master of the *Ascension*, and was held responsible for the loss of that vessel in the Gulf of Cambay. He died in India in 1610.' (Foster 1940, p. 129; also see note 12 in the introduction of this text.)

32 A Tucke of Callico : a turban.

33 Her Majesties letter : the fleet carried a supply of letters filled with praise from Queen Elizabeth to foreign leaders. The names and titles were left blank; only two were filled in and presented, one at Aceh and the other at Bantam.

Throughout early-modern Asia, a letter of greeting from one ruler to another was treated with fabulous ceremony, as if it were literally the monarch herself. In the Purchas narrative, the royal letter rides through Aceh on its own elephant, in a '... small castle (like a coach) upon his back, covered with crimson velvet. In the middle thereof was a great bason of gold, and a peece of silke exceeding richly wrought to cover it, under which Her Majesties letter was put.' The 'tenor' of Queen Elizabeth's letter to the King of Aceh appears in the same narrative. It appeals for liberal trade, protection for their subjects, and mutual enmity against the Spanish. (ibid., pp. 91–6)

34 Doulat : an adaptation of a Persian word meaning prosperity or felicity. John Davis wrote : 'Before any man can come to the kings presence, he must put of[f] his hose and shooes and come before him bare-legged and bare-footed, holding the palmes of the hands together and, heaveing them up above his head, bowing with the bodie, must say *Doulat*; which done, dutie is discharged, and so hee sitteth down, in the kings presence.' (Davis 1880, pp. 149–50)

35 If our Queene were married, & how long she had raigned : Queen Elizabeth I of England had declined to marry and bear children, and by 1602 she had been on the throne for 44 years. All these circumstances would have been considered unusual in Southeast Asia, thus causing the Sultan of Aceh to 'wonder'.

36 Two Crises : meaning two krises, or Malay daggers.

37 Hee spoake Portugale : there were several linguas francas in the Indian Ocean. Most European traders learned to speak simplified forms of Portuguese and *bahasa Melayu pasar*, or market Malay. Political officials in some countries also corresponded in Farsi. Using interpreters and patience, even complex treaties could be accomplished with surprising accuracy across these many languages. For example, when representatives of Louis XIV negotiated with the court of Ayutthaya in the 1680s, translations went from French to Portuguese to Malay to Thai and back again with few errors. However, reliance on interpreters

also left foreigners vulnerable. For example, the Dutch were sometimes accused of disabling rival companies by killing their translators.

38 Callico Lawne : something of an oxymoron, this was cotton fabric much finer than ordinary calico (see note 50). The latter name derives from the French city of Laon, known for linen manufacture.

39 The Susan, whom the Generall had offered to the King to sell : the fact that Lancaster wished to sell the *Susan* instead of filling it with pepper is indicative of two circumstances : one, with so many sailors having died and more sure to follow, it was doubtful whether enough men would be left to handle a fourth ship. And two, that Lancaster knew his funds were insufficient to establish a permanent presence in the East Indies. This is additional evidence that the Company was underfunded and required more aggressive means of acquiring capital.

40 A peale of ordinance : it was customary to signal the arrival and departure of dignitaries by firing cannon, hopefully without killing anyone. For some reason, blanks were not used.

41 64 Rialles of eight the Bahar : a bahar weighed around 175 kilograms, but measurements and monetary values varied at different ports. Thus, details of completed transactions were vital information for merchants and directors.

Spanish reales (and Spanish dollars, worth eight reals) were widely accepted in Southeast Asia. The English company had managed to find almost £16,000 worth of these coins to purchase pepper and other goods, but had to make up another £6,000 by requesting a special mint from Queen Elizabeth. Understandably, Asian traders refused to accept the strange money, though today these 'Porticullis Testerns' sell at auction for well over £1,000.

42 Gabriel Towerson : Foster writes, 'He had subsequently a long period of service under the Company, and was principal factor of the Moluccas when he was put to death by the Dutch in the "Massacre of Amboyna".' (Foster 1940, p. 133)

43 Rovers at sea : the Portuguese-English operation to suppress piracy is ironic considering they were otherwise robbing each other. Unsurprisingly, their cooperation came to nothing. Shortly after, the English pillaged a Portuguese merchant ship (see note 52).

44 Oulde stone house : due to Southeast Asia's prolonged dry seasons and houses made of thatch, fire struck grave fear into traders and townspeople alike. The former could see a year's worth of goods vanish in flames, while the latter could lose hundreds of houses at a time, as Lancaster had just witnessed in Aceh. A stone warehouse was a significant advantage, but Europeans were often banned from building them because they could double as fortifications.

45 Priaman : modern-day Pariaman, 900 kilometers from Aceh on the southwestern coast of Sumatra.

Henry Middleton : the brother of John Middleton, captain of the *Hector*, who did not survive the voyage. Henry later commanded the second voyage and became prominent in the Company.

46 A Flemmish Pinnace which had lost her Admiral : the pinnace was the *Lam* from the fleet of Joris van Spilbergen (see note 48). According to the journal of this Dutch captain, his other two ships arrived at Aceh on 6 September 1602, though by then Lancaster had bought the pinnace from the desperate crew.

47 A great ship of Saint Mallos in Fraunce : Foster writes, 'The Croissant and Corbin sailed in May 1601 under the command of Michel Frotet, Sieur de Bardelière. The Corbin was wrecked on the Maldives in June 1602, as described by François Pryard de Laval, who was on board (see his narrative). A general account of the voyage was written by François Martin, and this states that the Croissant reached Aceh on 14 July. After procuring a small quantity of pepper, she sailed for France on 10 November. De la Bardelière died eleven days later, after an illness of about four months.' (Foster 1940, pp. 133–4)

48 The 8 day of September : the math seems short for this agreement to raid Portuguese ships in the Strait of Malacca. Perhaps it meant the two Dutch ships under van Spilbergen would one-eighth of the spoils each, while the three English ships were to each get one-sixth. That left one-quarter for other players like the Sultan of Aceh and the Admiralty.

Also note that the *Susan* had been ordered away to load pepper. Foster writes : 'The men of the *Susan* (then at Priaman) were indignant at being excluded from the compact; and on their return to England they submitted a petition to King James, setting forth their grievance. The East India Company, in its reply to this representation, declared

that all its sailors were engaged for a trading voyage only and their wages were fixed accordingly. Lancaster, it was stated, had therefore, before leaving Achin, made a special "contract with all the mariners of the *Redd Dragon*, the *Hectour*, and the *Assention*, what shares they should have in such prize as should be taken by them then in consortshipp together"; and after their arrival in England the men were duly paid all that was owing to them on that account (The First Letter Book, pp. 25–7). How the controversy ended is not known. ... It may be noted that the Company had also to pay to the Lord High Admiral (the Earl of Nottingham) the usual tenth levied by him on all prize goods (*The Dawn of British Trade*, p. 246).' (Foster 1940, p. 134)

49 S. Thoma : São Tomé de Meliapore, the Portuguese station in Madras.

50 Calico : a cheap, plain-woven textile made from semi-processed cotton. The name comes from Calicut, a major center of its production.

Pentadoes : printed calico, from the Portuguese *pintado*.

Orlops : the lowest deck of ship.

51 Ruske : hard, dry biscuit broken into pieces.

Suckets : wet, candied fruit.

52 Discharged her of the best of her lading : With limited purchases of good pepper, and with the price soon to collapse in London, the English voyage would not have been profitable except for the robbery of the *Santo Antônio*. Foster describes it as : '... a vessel of 1200 tons, bound from India to Malacca, with many passengers and a rich cargo, which included a stock of calicoes specially suited for the Eastern markets.' (Foster 1940, p. xxx) It is unclear to whom the cargo belonged. During Lancaster's previous piracy in the Indian Ocean, he was scrupulous in only seizing Portuguese goods. Given the large number of Asian passengers on the *Santo Antônio*, however, some of the seized cargo may have belonged to country traders.

When he returned to Aceh with the loot, Lancaster allegedly said he was '... much bound to God, that had eased him of a very heavy care'. Foster suggests that the captain had turned to piracy in desperation after honest attempts at trade proved insufficient. That view is not supported. Lancaster spent most of his life raiding the Portuguese, including his hugely profitable sack of Penambuco. There is no evidence he ever changed his ways.

Like the raid at Pernambuco, the piracy against the *Santo Antônio* was very lucrative. In addition to padding Company profits and his crew's pockets, Lancaster used the cargo to establish a permanent English presence in the East Indies for the first time.

This brings up an important historical question : was it always the intention of the 'marchants in London' to finance a voyage of piracy in order to bolster their underfunded venture in 1601? It appears so. Otherwise, the Company did not have the necessary investment capital to establish a trading operation on the far side of the world. Moreover, by giving James Lancaster command of a fast, well-armed warship accompanied by merchant vessels with large holds, the Company showed that it expected such action to occur. Even more obviously, the Company had letters from the Lord High Admiral which 'authorised' seizing goods from the king and subjects of Spain and Portugal (ibid., p. xxix, note referencing The First Letter Book, pp. 191–6).

Numerous problems within the Company provide more evidence that its finances were weak. The initial subscriptions had come up short when investors backed out of their promises, which then required significant restructuring to attract money in deeper pockets. At least one of the ships, the *Susan*, was only purchased with a buy-back scheme. And when all the ships returned, the Company had to borrow still more money to pay the crew and merchants. Of course, it was a wise business decision to delay that financial commitment while there was still a fair chance all their employees would die at sea.

Most of all, there was no effort by the London merchants to equip a second voyage until they received profits from the first. This angered the queen and her council, who accused the merchants of violating their charter. Worse, they seemed to have already fallen far behind the Dutch, who were busy preparing large, annual fleets based on capitalisation ten times that of the English.

There have always been a number of ways for struggling firms to acquire venture capital. One is to borrow at high rates of interest. Another is to sell shares of the company, though eventually this dilutes profits. A third way is obtain credit from the state, by fair or corrupt means. One final option is to steal it. By seizing the required capital from the Portuguese, the English company was able to ramp up its operations without incurring further debt.

The Dutch and others did this to great effect too. And in grandiose fashion, the Spanish had become powerful by stealing gold and silver from foreign peoples. The difference in 1601 was that a group of London merchants privatised state piracy into a corporate business model.

53 Ordinance of Brasse, and those verye great and Massey : the author probably meant large, bronze cannon. The development of lighter, more reliable bronze artillery in place of iron pieces changed dynamics of power in the early modern period, particularly at sea.

54 Their Lawes are severely inflicted : Malay sultanates were generally under Islamic sharia law. This grew particularly severe in Aceh under rulers such as Iskander Muda (r. 1607–36) when travellers noted large numbers of amputees who had been convicted of theft and other crimes.

55 Cashe, whereof 2100 maketh a Masse, so that a Copaine is ... : 'cash' had several meanings and conflicting etymologies, but in this instance it referred to small tokens of tin, lead or copper, often of Chinese origin. 'Masse' or mas came from the Malay word for gold (*emas*), and was a small coin with a more specific value than the lowly cash (often 36 grains of gold). 'Copaine' meant the Malay kupang, a smaller gold coin usually worth one-fourth of a mas.

56 Shippes, Sayles, Mastes, Anchors, and Cables, are all of wood : the sails of junks and other Asian craft were often mats of rattan; anchors were usually compound constructions of wood with iron or stone; rigging was rattan, bamboo, or coir made from coconut fibers.

57 Malies speech : the vocabulary is *bahasa Melayu pasar* (see n. 37).

58 Deus vortat bene : a Latin phrase uttered at the beginning of voyages. It translates roughly as, 'May God have it turn out well'.

The *Ascension* departed for home with a cargo of 210,000 lbs. of pepper, 1,100 lbs. of cloves, 6,030 lbs. of cinnamon, and 3,420 lbs. of gumlac. (Stevens 1886, p. 247)

59 Moonsoon : from November to February, winds in the northern Indian Ocean prevail from the northeast, making it the season to sail west. Winds from the opposite direction prevail from May to September. While in detail the monsoon system is extraordinarily complicated, this general pattern allowed early mariners to cross the ocean in clumsy, leaky vessels that could not sail upwind.

60 Corpus Sanctus : Foster notes it was usually called *corpo sancto*, or St. Elmo's Fire. This phenomenon can form around long, pointed objects within an electrical field, such a ship's mast during a thunderstorm. Air molecules within the field become ionized into a luminous plasma which emits a faint glow.

61 Two Marmaides : as they were sailing about 500 miles east of the Cape of Good Hope, the animals may have been pelagic fur seals of the genus *Arctocephalus*, with *A. tropicalus* being most likely. Another candidate would be southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*).

62 The height of 33 and a halfe : that is, 33° 30' south latitude. The vessel was the *Croissant*, last seen at Aceh (see note 47). The French ship and crew were so battered that they risked foundering in mid-ocean (see note 66), yet putting into a strange shore was a greater danger. Sailors preferred the sea they knew over land they didn't.

63 Dolphins : the author very likely meant dorados or mahi-mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*), not the marine mammal.

64 Two Holland shippes : in their letter from St. Helena, Style and Highlord identified these as the *Amsterdam* and *Dergoes* under Jacob Cornelisz van Neck.

65 Pætania : Pattani, now in southern Thailand, was a semi-independent state and busy port for much of the 17th century. It also became a haven for pirates who lacked state sponsorship.

Molucos : the Maluku Islands, also known as the Spice Islands. Nutmeg, mace and cloves, which were three of the most important spices traded at the time, were indigenous to this small archipelago and could not be found elsewhere.

66 The French-men departed this roade : the *Croissant* carried two letters from the *Ascension* addressed to the East India Company. These were written by Roger Style and Edward Highlord, whose text closely matches the *True and Large Discourse*.

Apparently the letters matched each other as well. It seems likely that two copies were sent with the *Croissant* due to uncertainties about delivery. In fact, the ship never reached France. In imminent danger of sinking, it met three Dutch vessels who agreed to take the French crew onboard. The Dutch refused to strike a deal for the cargo, though, and

ransacked the doomed ship just before it went to the bottom. Foster writes that subsequently, 'The Dutch ships reached Plymouth on 3 June, and the letters for the English Company were at once forwarded to London.' (Foster 1940, p. 140)

67 Flore, and Corves : the westernmost islands of the Azores.

68 Eight day of June : the 1603 text wrongly had 'May'.

69 Woolwich : upon arrival in London, potential profits evaporated. The market was saturated with pepper, and eventually the product was distributed to investors as an in-kind dividend. This only further depressed prices. Consequently, funding for the next few voyages came from new subscriptions rather than revenue.

70 Pegu language : the vocabulary is Mon-Khmer. This was the primary language of several kingdoms in the Gulf of Martaban such as Bago, which the Portuguese pronounced as Pegu. Mons, or 'Peguers', sailed and traded extensively around the Malay Peninsula. The author likely encountered them while trading in Aceh, giving credence to the idea that he was a merchant aboard the *Ascension*.

71 A note of the mens names deceased : The list only includes those known to the author up to the day of the *Ascension*'s departure from the fleet, 13 November 1602, and during its voyage home.

More fatalities occurred as the other ships returned to England. Though the *Dragon* and *Hector* passed safely through the Strait of Sunda in early March 1603, a huge storm hit them in the southern Indian Ocean on 28 April. They survived, but by then : '... our ships were so shaken that they were leakie all the voyage after,' as the Purchas narrator wrote.

Trouble struck again as they approached the Cape of Good Hope, especially for Lancaster and the *Dragon* :

> The third of May wee had another very sore storme, which continued all the night; and the seas did so beate upon the ships quarter that it shooke all the ironworke of her rother [rudder], and the next day, in the morning, our rother brake cleane from the sterne of our shippe, and presently sunke into the sea. This strooke a present feare into the hearts of all men; so that the best of us and most experienced knew not

> what to doe. And specially seeing ourselves in such a tempestuous sea and so stormie a place, so that I thinke there bee few worse in all the world. Now our ship drave up and downe in the sea like a wracke, which way soever the wind carried her. So that sometimes we were within three or four leagues of the Cape Buena Esperanza; then commeth a contrary wind and driveth us almost to fortie degrees to the southward, into the hayle and snow and sleetie cold weather; and this was another great miserie unto us, that pinched us exceeding sore, so that our case was miserable and very desperate. (Foster 1940, p. 116)

Faithful Captain Cole aboard the *Hector* stayed nearby throughout the crisis. During a break in the weather, he sent over his own mizzen mast from which the *Dragon*'s carpenter made a new rudder. Unfortunately there was little iron left to secure it, so the new rudder broke away as well. At that point, the crew began to talk of abandoning their ship and trying to get aboard the *Hector*.

General Lancaster replied : 'Nay. Wee will yet abide God's leasure, to see what mercie He will shew us; for I despaire not to save ourselves, the ship, and the goods, by one means or other, as God shall appoint us.' Nevertheless, he wrote a letter of farewell to London, stating :

> I will strive with all diligence to save my ship and her goods, as you may perceive by the course I take in venturing mine owne life and those that are with mee. I cannot tell where you should looke for mee, if you send out any pinnace to seek mee; because I live at the devotion of the winds and seas. And thus fare you well; desiring God to send us a merrie meeting in this world, if it be His good will and pleasure.
>
> The passage to the East-India lieth in 61 ½ degrees by the north-west on the America side. (ibid., p. 118)

Lancaster then allowed the *Hector* to depart during the night.

But by morning, Captain Cole remained dutifully just a few leagues away. (He would not come closer for fear of causing the *Dragon*'s crew to flee their ship.) When the seas briefly calmed, Lancaster had the *Hector* approach. Cole then sent over his best swimmers, who somehow managed to hang another temporary rudder on the *Dragon*.

By this point they had drifted to leeward of the Cape of Good Hope, so they set a course for St. Helena instead. As they did so, the main yard broke loose and carried away another man to drown in the sea.

The ships reached St. Helena on 16 June. They recuperated there until 5 July, and arrived at the Downs on 11 September.

Queen Elizabeth did not greet them upon their return. She had died seven months earlier on the 24th of March 1603.

Roger Style was made captain of the *Ascension* for the second voyage to the East Indies. He died of illness in Bantam in 1604.

In the promotions that followed Style's death, Edward Highlord was made captain of the *Susan*. On his journey home in 1605, the ship disappeared with all hands.

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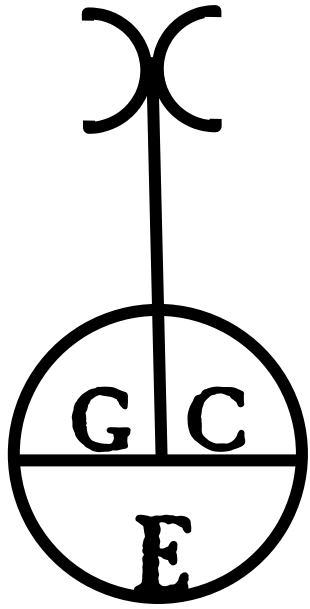
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